

## Office of Management

### Regulatory Information Management Services

*The government collects and maintains vast amounts of information both in paper and electronic forms. The Office of Management (OM)'s Regulatory Information Management Services (RIMS) assists Department (ED) employees with the appropriate use and management of such information. Whether you have received a Freedom of Information Act request or a Privacy Act request or need guidance about safeguarding privacy data, properly storing and managing your records, or obtaining the proper clearances for information collections, RIMS can help.*

### INFORMATION COLLECTION PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995 ACT 5 USC § 552

The *Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995* seeks to organize federal agency information collection activities in a way that minimizes the paperwork burden on the public of providing the information requested. The act requires federal agencies to obtain the approval of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for most activities related to collecting information from the public. If you are involved in collecting information for ED from 10 or more people, groups, or institutions, the Paperwork Reduction Act applies. Examples of materials that require OMB review and approval include forms for grant applications and performance reports, surveys, and questionnaires, as well as lists of questions that will be posed to 10 or more people as part of a study. Review copies should be submitted electronically through the Education Department Information Collection System (EDICS).

RIMS staff can help ensure your information collection clearance (ICC) request receives the required reviews promptly by working with you and your principal office ICC coordinator. A comprehensive handbook on the ICC process, which contains contact information for ED's ICC coordinators, is located on ConnectED, and can be found by entering the words "information collection clearances" in the search field.

### INFORMATION ACCESS FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 5 USC § 552

The *Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)*, first enacted in 1966, provides that any person may have access to any Department records except for those specifically exempted from disclosure by the act. The Department of Education's policy regarding FOIA emphasizes responsible disclosure to the fullest extent possible balanced against the Department's interest in preserving and protecting the confidentiality of sensitive personal information, proprietary commercial information, and internal governmental information.

The FOIA Requester Service Center (FRSC), located in RIMS, is responsible for the intake, processing, and tracking of FOIA requests for ED's headquarters offices. For more information about ED's FOIA program, contact your principal office's FOIA coordinator (see <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/foia/contacts.html>), or visit [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov) and click on "FOIA" in the lower left-hand corner of the page.

### DATA PROTECTION PRIVACY ACT OF 1974 5 USC § 552a

The *Privacy Act of 1974* provides safeguards against the unwarranted invasion of an individual's privacy through the misuse of records by federal agencies and allows members of the public to learn how their personal information is collected, maintained, used, and disclosed by the federal government. ED collects personally identifiable information from millions of students, parents, grantees, employees, and others. Safeguarding this information is a priority at ED.





## If ED collects it— PROTECT IT

\*\*\*

## If ED uses it— DON'T LOSE IT

RIMS' FOIA Requester Service Center is also responsible for handling *Privacy Act* requests, which individuals make concerning their own personal information contained in an ED *Privacy Act* system of records. These are records from which personal information, such as financial or medical information, can be retrieved by the individual's name or by an individual identifier such as a Social Security number. Guidance on *Privacy Act* requests is available on ConnectED by typing "Privacy Act guidance" in the search field.

**RIMS also is responsible for coordinating policy for and implementation of ED's Privacy Safeguards Program.** RIMS provides outreach, training, and guidance for all employees and contractors on privacy safeguard requirements and best practices. This includes training and technical guidance to help program and IT system managers comply with major portions of the *Privacy Act* and the *E-Government Act of 2002*, which requires, among other things, that agencies notify the public before collecting or maintaining personal information. As you carry out your work at ED, remember that although access to privacy data is limited only to employees and contractors whose jobs require such access, each of us is responsible for being aware of the rules and practices for protecting privacy data in any format and for reporting any suspected or actual misuse, loss, or theft of privacy data.

For additional information about ED's Privacy Safeguards Program, contact the RIMS Privacy Safeguards Helpline by phone at 202-401-1269 or by e-mail at [privacyadvocate@ed.gov](mailto:privacyadvocate@ed.gov).

### **RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND DISPOSAL FEDERAL RECORDS ACT 44 USC CHAPTERS 31 and 33**

Federal records document the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, and other activities of the Department. As a Department employee, you create and use federal records in many formats, including electronic formats such as e-mail (for specific guidance about managing e-mail records, see [http://wdcrobiis09/doc\\_img/rm\\_faq.doc](http://wdcrobiis09/doc_img/rm_faq.doc)).

**Under the *Federal Records Act*, every Department employee is required to:**

- Create records sufficient to document ED's official activities and actions and manage those records in accordance with ED record-keeping requirements.
- Destroy records only as authorized by ED records schedules and never dispose of or remove ED information without authorization.
- File records in a record-keeping system for safe storage and efficient retrieval, and maintain personal papers and nonrecord materials separately from ED records.

For additional information about ED's records management program, contact your principal office's records liaison officer (see [http://connected/doc\\_img/departmentrlo.doc](http://connected/doc_img/departmentrlo.doc)) or call the RIMS Records Management Helpline at 202-401-1517 or by e-mail at [RMhelp@ed.gov](mailto:RMhelp@ed.gov).